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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 USNATO 000577

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TAGS: [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [RU](#)
SUBJECT: NRC: RUSSIANS ILL-PREPARED TO RESPOND TO US 2+2
MISSILE DEFENSE OFFER

REF: A. USNATO 263
[1](#)B. USNATO 430
[1](#)C. USNATO 544

Classified By: Charge Richard Olson for reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (C/NF) Summary: In the October 17 NATO-Russia Council (NRC) reinforced meeting on missile defense, Under Secretary of Defense Edelman, EUR Assistant Secretary of State Fried, and Missile Defense Agency Director LTG Obering offered our vision for a joint U.S./NATO/Russia regional missile defense architecture and a threat based approach to activation of the U.S. missile defense (MD) sites in Poland and Czech Republic -- ideas originally presented to the Russians by Secretaries Rice and Gates in the October 12-13 "2 plus 2" talks. Germany, the UK, and France praised the fresh U.S. offers of cooperation with Russia, particularly the notion of linking activation of the U.S. third site to the threat. However, even when pressed by Allies, Russian MFA Director Antonov failed to provide an initial Russian response to U.S. offers, but did characterize the 2 plus 2 talks as "very important," asserting that they could lead the way-forward on missile defense, CFE, and post-START. Antonov became increasingly animated/agitated as he responded to critical statements and questions from Allies. Allies strongly refuted Antonov's claim that Iran represents no threat to Europe or the United States. End summary.

U.S. OFFERS FRESH PROPOSALS IN 2 PLUS 2

[1](#)2. (C) On October 17, Defense Under Secretary for Policy Eric Edelman briefed the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) on the outcome of the U.S./Russia bilateral 2 plus 2 talks in Moscow (Note: Secretaries Rice and Gates met with their Russian

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counterparts October 12-13 to discuss, inter alia, missile defense. End note). While noting that the U.S missile defense (MD) system was threat based so that the time sequence of operationalizing the system can be tied to the development of an Iranian ballistic missile system, Edelman emphasized that the U.S. will not suspend MD negotiations with Poland and the Czech Republic. Edelman informed Allies that the United States and Russia agreed to another 2 plus 2 meeting in the spring of 2008, as well as the continuation of bilateral expert level missile defense talks. He stressed

that there was a constructive exchange of intelligence on the threat -- arguably the most detailed intelligence exchange to date between the U.S and Russia on any subject.

13. (C) U/S Edelman called upon Allies and Russia to work for a constructive, cooperative approach to deal with the Iranian threat. "Unity is the only solution to Iran," he said. Edelman told the NRC that collaboration among the United States, NATO Allies, and Russia would give a real boost to our efforts.

14. (C) Missile Defense Agency Director LTG Henry "Trey" Obering presented the U.S. views on a potential joint regional architecture to protect NATO Allies as well as Russia. He reiterated Edelman's point that even after the U.S. completed construction of the site, its activation could be tied to the emergence of the Iranian threat. In this plan, NATO and Russian systems would not be fully integrated but could share data in a conceptually similar way as the NRC Theater Missile Defense project (i.e., through the use of computer systems to share the radar pictures). A further step could be to link certain command and control elements.

15. (C) LTG Obering also reported on the U.S. visit to the Russian Qabala radar station in Azerbaijan and Russian visits to U.S. sites. He pointed out that the Qabala radar is more capable than previously thought and that the U.S. had requested data on previous Iranian missile tests, although it could not replace the X-band radar in the Czech Republic.

2 PLUS 2 TALKS: RUSSIANS A STEP BEHIND AND A DOLLAR SHORT

16. (C/NF) MFA Director of Disarmament and International

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Security Anatoliy Antonov had little to say about Moscow's initial reaction to the U.S. offers in the 2 plus 2 talks. Antonov said Russia would examine the U.S. proposal for a joint regional architecture, but added that Russia continued to see the "old logic" in the U.S. characterization of Iran as an enemy. Russia "opposes a Holy Alliance against Iran," which could lead to another arms race. He contended that the U.S. system would upset peace and stability, and therefore, the U.S. should freeze its development. Antonov boldly asserted that "global MD" and prompt global strike capacity would give the U.S. a dangerously dominant position. Russian Ambassador Totskiy said Russia did not agree with the negative media coverage of the 2 plus 2 talks. France praised the U.S. offer of a phased approach to the activation of the sites in Poland and Czech Republic and pointedly asked Russia's views on this proposal. Antonov did not respond and simply said Russia was studying the U.S. offer. (Note: The Russian DCM told us later that the French question so agitated Antonov that he avoided the French MFA Director of Strategic Affairs Philippe Carre after the meeting broke. End note)

IRAN IS NOT AN ENEMY

17. (C) Antonov said Russia did not accept the U.S threat assessment of Iran on either a technical or political level. Iran does not have the technical, production, or test capability for future long-range missile work, he said. Antonov said Russia does not accept the U.S. assertion that the U.S. MD sites in Poland and Czech Republic are not directed against Russia. While acknowledging that 10 interceptors posed little threat to the Russian strategic deterrent, he asserted that the U.S system could be easily upgraded. Antonov told the NRC that Russia was ready to jointly assess the threat with NATO and would consider future work once the threat has been agreed.

ALLIES MAKE ANTONOV HOT UNDER THE COLLAR

¶18. (C/NF) The Czech Republic strongly criticized Russia for playing politics with MD and noted that the U.S. had made generous MD proposals. Poland said MD was purely defensive and expressed concern that Russia's analysis of MD was based on geopolitics rather than an objective analysis of Russia's security. Germany appreciated the new ideas for MD cooperation put forward in the 2 plus 2 talks. In addition, Germany was optimistic that "we" can move forward, but supported working closely with Russia on MD. While noting that MD was a bilateral issue and there was no NATO ballistic MD program, France said NATO and Russia need a cooperative approach on MD. The UK, Canada, Hungary, and the Netherlands were highly critical of the Russian dismissal of the Iranian threat. France and the UK praised the U.S. offer to link activation of the European sites with the Iranian threat.

¶19. (C/NF) In his second intervention, Antonov praised the 2 plus 2 talks as "very important." Although no decisions were reached, he said, there was an open and frank discussion on MD, post-START, and CFE. Flustered by Allied interventions on the Iranian threat, he emphatically stated that there was no incentive for Iran to attack Europe or the United States, because, "it would be national suicide." He mentioned President Putin's proposal that the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) should be a global treaty which would be a real confidence building measure for the Missile Technology Control Regime. Antonov claimed Pakistan would be a greater threat than Iran if its nuclear arsenal fell into the hands of the Taliban. Increasingly flustered, Antonov responded to Czech and Polish criticism, saying Russia was willing and prepared to cooperate on MD. He stated that Russian opposition to MD was not a political question and said he could not understand the West's focus on an Iranian threat. This contradicted an earlier statement in this meeting by Russian Ambassador to NATO Totskiy who said it was a political dispute on missile defense and suggested the technical gap was not so wide, because "on the level of physics, our assessments are identical."

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RUSSIAN CANCELLATION OF TMD EXERCISE

¶10. (C) Canada, the UK, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, and the United States expressed regret for the Russian cancellation of the Computer Assisted Theater Missile Defense Exercise (CAX 2007) to be held in Germany in November (see REF C). Ambassador Totskiy said Russia pulled out because it had never received a satisfactory answer to the relationship between NRC TMD project and the NATO project (ALTBMD). (Note: The Russian delegation often raises this criticism -- they want to be more involved in ALTBMd and are tired of "waiting in the corridor." End note)

POST-START

¶11. (C) EUR A/S Dan Fried noted that in the 2 plus 2 talks, the U.S. and Russia were looking for ways to move forward on a post-START regime, but that no conclusions had been reached. Ambassador Antonov appreciated the U.S. offer that the agreement would be legally binding, but said the real issue was what would be included in the arrangement. Germany expressed support for post-START and other arms control regimes and hoped to see them developed further.

COMMENT

¶12. (C/NF) Allies are increasingly challenging Russian claims in the NRC and were supportive of the U.S. offers for a joint regional architecture and a phased approach to activation. It appeared today that the Russian bureaucracy did not know how to respond to the 2 plus 2 offers and was waiting on Putin to set the tone. Even if Russia ultimately rejects our offers of cooperation, these efforts may pay results with Allies. Several Allies (e.g., Germany) take into account Russia's concerns in their internal deliberations on whether or not to support NATO MD at the Bucharest Summit. Offering cooperation to the Russians in the NATO-Russia Council helps us to manage these Allies and to build support for a Bucharest commitment to missile defense. End comment.

¶13. (U) This message has been cleared by U/S Edelman and A/S Fried.

OLSON